The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

The tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to him, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So, to them he addressed this parable.

"What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it? And when he. does find it, he sets it on his shoulders with great joy and, upon his arrival home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Rejoice with me because I. have found my lost sheep.' I tell you, in just the same way there will be more joy in
heaven. over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need. of repentance."

The Message

The Parable of the Lost Sheep reassures believers of God’s unwavering love and mercy. It teaches that no one is beyond God's reach and that He actively seeks to bring the lost back to Him. The parable calls for a spirit of repentance and highlights the joy that comes from reconciliation with God. It also challenges believers to reflect on their attitudes toward those who are lost, encouraging them to rejoice in their return rather than judge or exclude them.

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Understanding the Parable

The Parable of the Lost Sheep conveys several key spiritual lessons:

1. God's Personal Concern: The shepherd represents God, and the lost sheep represents a person who has strayed from God. The shepherd's willingness to leave the ninety-nine sheep to search for the one lost sheep illustrates God’s deep personal concern for every individual. It shows that each person is precious to God, and He actively seeks out those who are lost.
2. Joy in Repentance: The parable emphasizes the joy that God and all of heaven experience when a sinner repents and returns to Him. This joy is so great that it surpasses the contentment over those who are already in the fold and do not need to repent.
3. Inclusivity of God's Love: By telling this parable in response to the Pharisees' complaints about Jesus associating with sinners, Jesus highlights that God’s love and salvation are extended to everyone, especially those who are marginalized or considered unworthy by society.

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